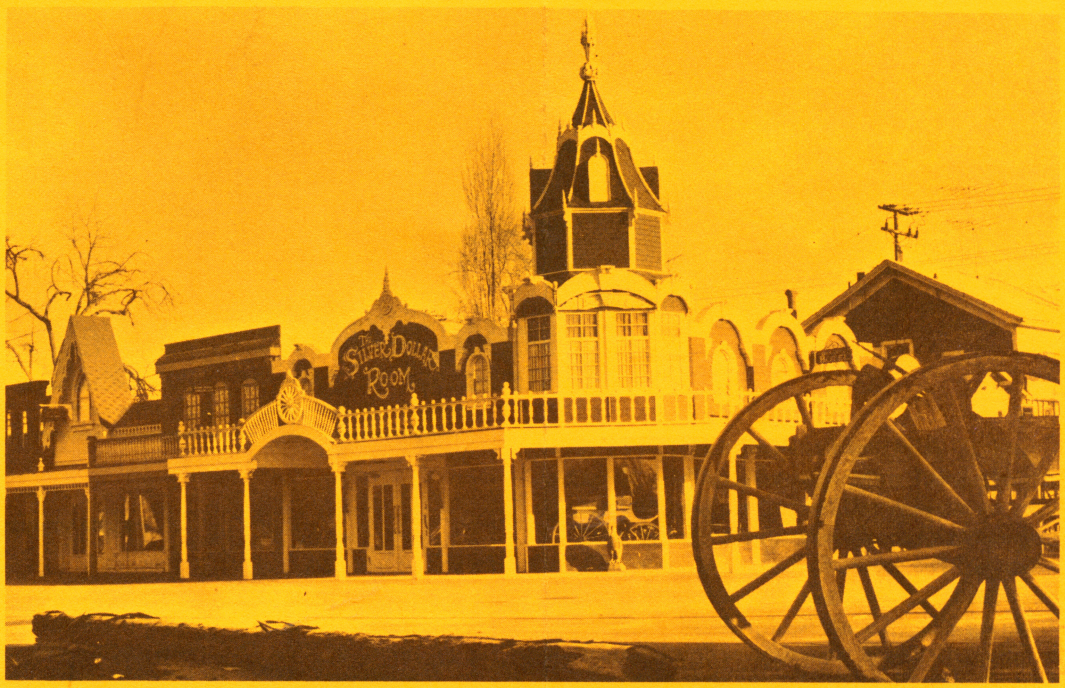
Contra Costa County Historical Society

BULLETIN

POST OFFICE BOX 190 MAY 1, 1970 MARTINEZ, CALIF. 94554

Panel of 4 Speakers to Describe Early Life in Historic San Ramon Valley Area



Site of Society's membership meeting is this "modern" addition to the historic Danville Hotel-Restaurant. Part of the ancient, still-used structure can be seen at right rear.

How life was really lived 'way out West, in the small purlieus of San Ramon Valley, will be revealed at a membership meeting of the Contra Costa County Historical Society in Danville, the evening of May 14.

A four-member panel, equally divided between the sexes, will recount the life and times of pioneers in the south-central section of the County. Panelists will draw upon recollections of family histories and experiences in the San Ramon, Tassajara and Sycamore Valley areas.

Messrs. George Wood and Howard Weidemann and Mmes. Vivian Coats Edmonston and Grace Sampson Corbett comprise the panel. The moderator will be Society Vice President Louis Stein.

The meeting is called at 7:30 p.m. with dinner in the Silver Dollar Room of the Danville Hotel-Restaurant, 155 South Hartz Avenue, Danville. No-host cocktails will be served at 7 p.m.

What members might miss in the telling of the region's history they will be able to see in a collection of historically significant

(Continued on page 2)

The Good Old Days in San Ramon Valley

The first frame house built in the valley was home of pioneer Leo Norris, in Norris Canyon Road, San Ramon. A Missourian, he came to the valley in 1850 and bought 4,000 acres from Jose Maria Amador, land grantee under the Mexican regime. The women on the porch are Norris' relatives. This is the earliest known photo of the home.

Danville's beloved schoolmaster, Albert W. Young posed for posterity in this photo with his wife, son and two daughters. He taught in the Sycamore School in the 1880's.

Photos from Louis L. Stein and Roy S. Bloss

(Continued from page 1)

photographs to be posted by Mr. Stein. Also on display will be a group of ancient farm tools and other artifacts of the area.

One of the items to be shown is a still-functioning, handmade wooden jack for changing buggy wheels, formerly used on the Thorup ranch. Another is the century-old L-N branding iron from the Leo Norris rancho, said to be the oldest brand in San Ramon Valley.

Members will find the panelists well qualified to relate local history. Mr. Wood and Mr. Wiedemann are both ranchers with substantial property interests of long standing in the area, and both have aided in the preservation of local history.

Mrs. Edmonston, who maintains homes in Tassajara and San Francisco is related to the pioneer Coats and Maxcy families, and has collected much detail on early life in Tassajara. Mrs. Corbett similarly is well acquainted with the Tassajara region, having taught at the Tassajara Grammar School in the early 1900's.

Dinner reservations for members and their guests are to be made with Secretary James Jory, P. O. Box 190, Martinez.

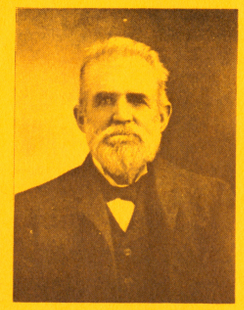
Committee Appointments

President A. F. Bray will announce committee appointments for the 1970 term at the Danville membership meeting.

The listing of members to committee posts follows a mail solicitation of preferences for volunteer service. Appointments are made by the President with concurrence of the Board of Directors.

Assignments are to be made to the following standing committees: Membership, Finance, Publicity, Program, Museum, Landmarks and Library.

Life in the valley spanned many eras. Left, Sunday excursionists alight from a 3-car train at Diablo Country Club, about 1916. Right, bearded Daniel Inman was one of the founders of Danville, and is said to have figured in naming the town. Later to come on the scene was Wm. Hemme, a Danville fruit orchardist (and nephew of the valley's storied August Hemme), who served two terms as Supervisor. An early home (1850's) in Tassajara was this 2-decker of scalloped gable and sill, built by retired sea captain John Peter Wilkes on Finley Road. It stood over 100 years before being razed in 1966.

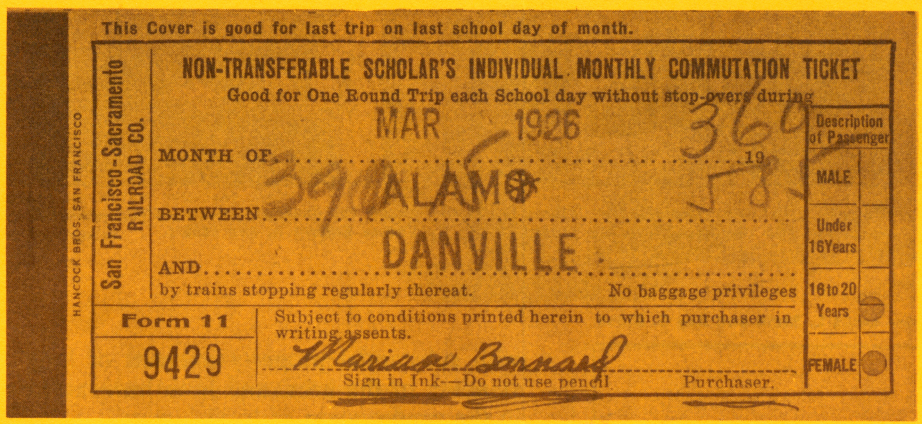


The San Ramon Valley Railroad, built and owned by valley farmers, commenced operations March 2, 1914 between Saranap and Danville. Later called the SF-Sacramento Railroad Co., it issued these tickets — a commute ducat for a ride from Walnut Creek, and a student's book of tickets for riding between Alamo and Danville on school days.

SAN FRANCISCO-SACRAMENTO RAILROAD Co.
WALNUT CREEK
—TO—
DANVILLE
COACH
484
Good for One Continuous Passage commencing not later than One Day after date of sale. Subject to tariff regulations.
Form 1
General Manager

RIDING THE RAILROAD

Tickets from Louis L. Stein Collection


This Cover is good for last trip on last school day of month.
NON-TRANSFERABLE SCHOLAR'S INDIVIDUAL MONTHLY COMMUTATION TICKET
Good for One Round Trip each School day without stop-overs during
San Francisco-Sacramento RAILROAD CO.
MONTH OF MAR 1926
BETWEEN ALAMO
AND DANVILLE
by trains stopping regularly thereat. No baggage privileges
Description of Passenger
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Under 16 Years
16 to 20 Years
FEMALE
Form 11
9429
Subject to conditions printed herein to which purchaser in writing assents.
Sign in Ink—Do not use pencil
Purchaser.
HANCOCK BROS., SAN FRANCISCO

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DINNER & PROGRAM

Speakers: George Wood
Howard Wiedemann
Vivian Coats Edmonston
Grace Sampson Corbett
Louis L. Stein, Moderator

Date: May 14, 1970

Place: Silver Dollar Room
Danville Hotel-Restaurant
155 S. Hartz Avenue
Danville, Calif.

Time: 7 p.m., no-host cocktails

Dinner: 7:30 p.m., $5.00

Reservations: To J. J. Jory, Sect'y
P.O. Box 190
Martinez, Calif. 94554

COME ONE! COME ALL!